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Paulina accompanied me a little way by the side of the mule, guided by the taciturn boy. "*Mio amico*," said she at parting, without any patronising air; "Go in peace, and God guard and bless you. I shall pray for you as for a brother; and, *mio amico*—we may never meet again, in this world at least; but, if you do not utterly despise the companion of this night's adventure, remember her at a future time, and, for her sake (here her voice trembled) speak a word or write a word in favour of poor, dear, oppressed Sicily. Addio! addio!"

So far the adventure was romantic enough; but I was arrested as I walked, after parting from my mule and its boy, with affected indifference through the gate; or rather, I should say, was civilly requested to wait on the governor. I found

my friend with him, stoutly denying any knowledge of the transaction. My arrival changed the face of matters; for as (which I had forgotten to mention, but it comes in as well here) Vannetto had descried the ship containing the two fugitives making away under full press of canvass early in the morning, I felt at liberty to speak out. The governor more than insinuated that I was an impertinent meddler; and let out that Tommaso, in a state of immense intoxication, had been to the palace, and allowed himself, perhaps designedly, to be pumped. Both myself and friend were admonished to keep what we knew to ourselves, and advised to go on board as soon as possible; which we did, without having discovered the governor's true sentiments.

## THE TURKS AND THEIR INSTITUTIONS.

### CHAPTER I.

WE first hear of the Turks in the sixth century, as the most despised portion of the slaves of the great khan, a chief of the Geougen, one of the Tartar hordes, which for ages have inhabited, or rather possessed, the great plains of central Asia.\* Their haunts lay mostly in the neighbourhood of the chain of mountains known as the Altai range, which were very fertile in minerals, particularly iron, and the Turks were mostly employed in extracting the ore and forging it. How long the latter remained in this degraded state, we know not, but at last a bold and energetic leader arose amongst them, named Bertezend, and persuaded them to assert their freedom and independence. The revolt proved successful; his daring was rewarded by a crown, and under his command the Turks distinguished themselves by several victories over the neighbouring tribes. The new khan now had the hardihood to seek the hand of his old master's daughter in marriage, but his alliance was contemptuously rejected. He met with better success amongst the Chinese, who bestowed on him one of their princesses, and the insult he had received from the Geougen was avenged in a great battle, in which nearly the whole of that nation was extirpated and their dominion put an end to, and that of the Turks took its place. Their heads, however, were not turned by prosperity, and they preserved the memory of their origin by an annual ceremony, at which a piece of iron was heated in the fire and hammered upon an anvil by the prince and his chief officers in succession; and even when their dominions covered a great tract of territory, they never encamped far from Mount Altai, their former abode. Their emperor's throne was always turned towards the east, and his tent was distinguished by a spear surmounted by a golden wolf, thrust in the ground at the door. They seem to have sacrificed to a supreme being, and to have sung hymns in honour of fire and air, earth and water, as deities of an inferior order. They had unwritten laws, in which offences against morality, or breaches of military discipline, were punished with terrible severity. One of their armies consisted of four hundred thousand men, and in less than fifty years they were connected in loans or alliances with the Romans, the Chinese, and the Persians, and all this while they were still a nomade horde of shepherds. They were terrible enemies to the Chinese, whose empire they invaded as often as internal dissensions gave them a prospect of success, and such was their superiority in arms to their civilized opponents, that their retreat was invariably purchased by subsidies. Their empire at last, however, became large and unwieldy; viceroys who were appointed became turbulent and revolted; continued successes introduced luxury and carelessness; the conquerors became enervated, and the tribes which they had subjugated rose in revolt, so that their dominion was overthrown after it had lasted for two hundred years.

The next time their name comes prominently before us in history, it is as guards of the Mussulman Caliph of the

Saracens, Motassem, who reigned in splendour at Bagdad between the years 841 and 870. He had recruited his mercenary forces by robust Turkish youths, either taken in war or purchased in trade, who were trained to bear arms, and instructed in the doctrines of the Mahometan faith. Fifty thousand of them at one time occupied the capital, while their chiefs filled the principal offices in the royal household, and acted as viceroys of the provinces. They behaved as hired soldiers may always be expected to act amongst a luxurious and enervated people, for the Arabs had by this time lost much of the warlike fervour which had distinguished them when they issued from their deserts to propagate the new faith. They rose in insurrection almost at regular intervals, upon receiving the least cause of discontent, murdered and maltreated the reigning prince, and disposed of the crown as they pleased, just as the prætorian guards had done at Rome centuries before.

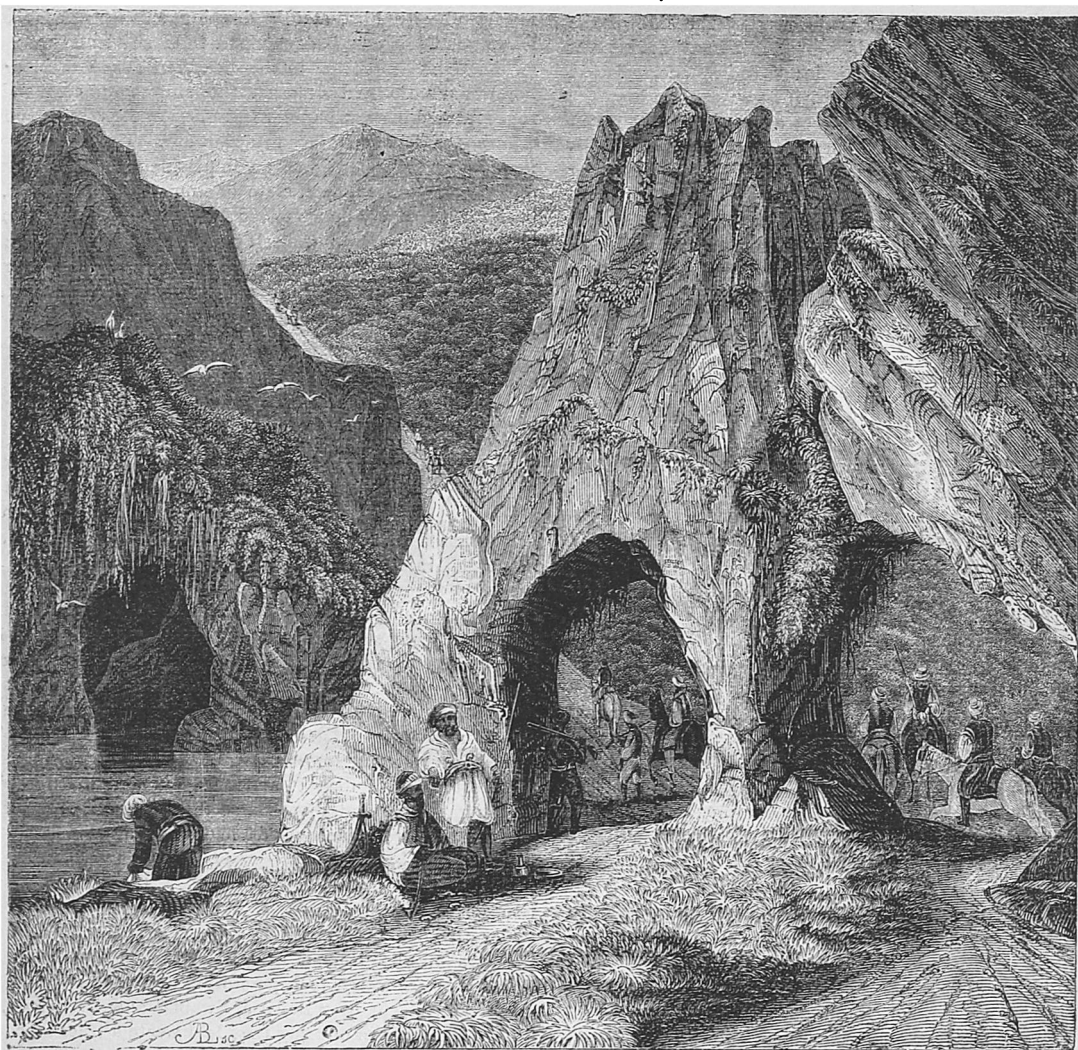
It was in the ninth century, however, that the Turks made themselves known to Europe, in all their might and ferocity, under the name of *Ungars* or *Hungarians*. They crossed the frontiers of the Roman empire in the year 889, in huge squadrons of cavalry, took possession of the province of Pannonia, and swept over Bavaria, Swabia, and Franconia, with such speed, that in one day they laid waste a tract of country fifty miles in circuit. In the year 900 they had penetrated as far as the Pyrenees, and in 924 they crossed the Alps, and desolated Italy; and it was not till the year 935 that they were defeated and repelled by the skill and valour of Henry the Fowler and Otho the Great, two Saxon princes, and settled down peaceably in modern Hungary.

The tribe were now scattered loosely over the desert from China to the Oxus and the Danube; one branch of it had founded a republic in Europe, and men of Turkish extraction were the guards and ministers of most of the Asiatic thrones. It was in the year 997 in which Mahmud the Gaznevide, the son of a Turkish emir, seized the throne of the Persian caliphs and assumed the title of *sultan*. He was famed as a warrior, and made twelve expeditions into Hindostan; but he was still unable to contend against the barbarous hordes of his own countrymen who hovered on the confines of his empire. During his lifetime, however, he managed to keep them in subjection and in peace; but during the reign of his son and successor, Massoud, in the year 1038, they burst upon Persia like an avalanche, and at the great battle of Zendeccan the sultan was defeated, and lost both his kingdom and his life.

The Turks now proceeded to the election of a king; and the choice fell upon Togrul Bey, the grandson of Seljuk, from whom the dynasty received the appellation of Seljukian. Under him, Persia reached the highest pitch of power and importance; he delivered the caliph of Bagdad from the assaults of a rival, and finally succeeded to his throne; and, for the first time, made the arms of the Turks feared at Constantinople.

Under his successor, the famous and terrible Alp Arslan, the prestige of Turkish valour and ferocity was fully upheld. He conquered Georgia and Armenia, and passing across the

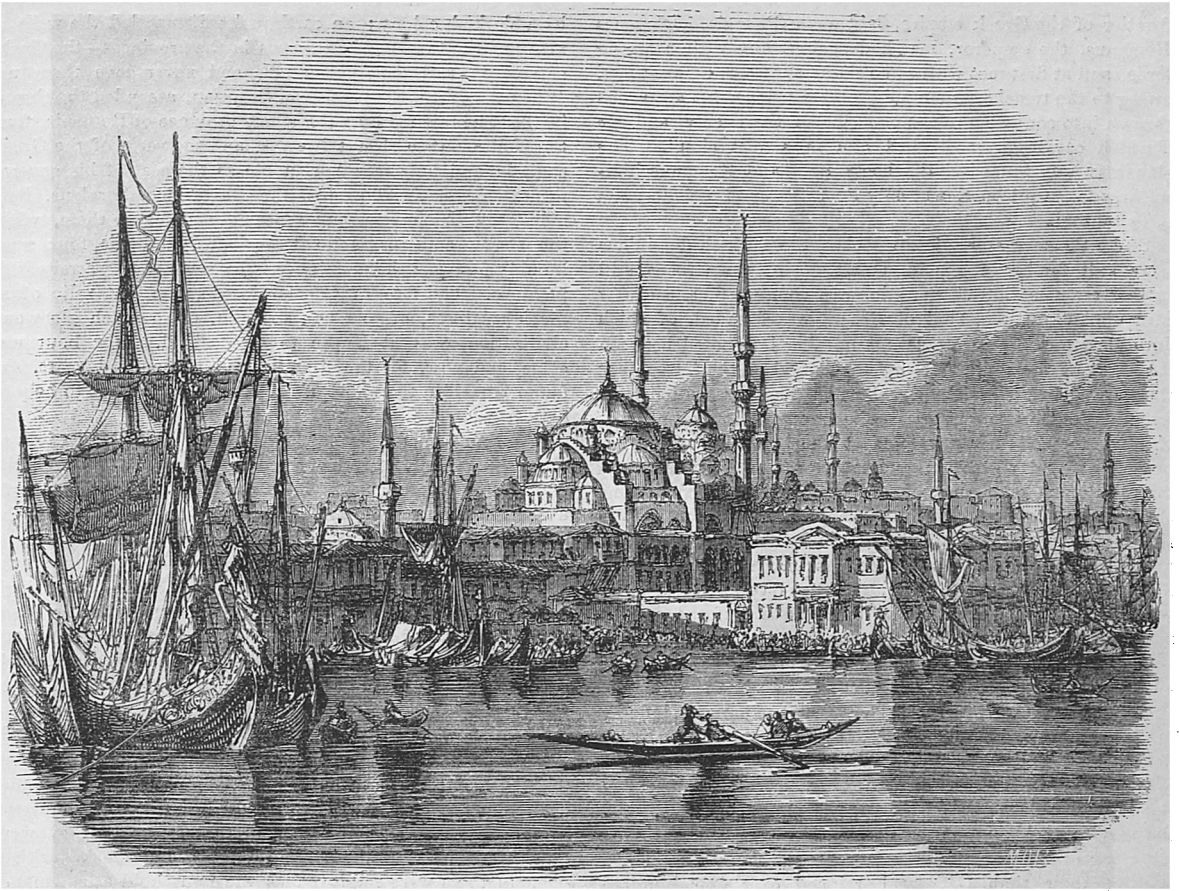
\* There was a tradition amongst them that the founder of their tribe was, like Romulus, suckled by a she-wolf, and they preserved the figure of that animal on their banners.



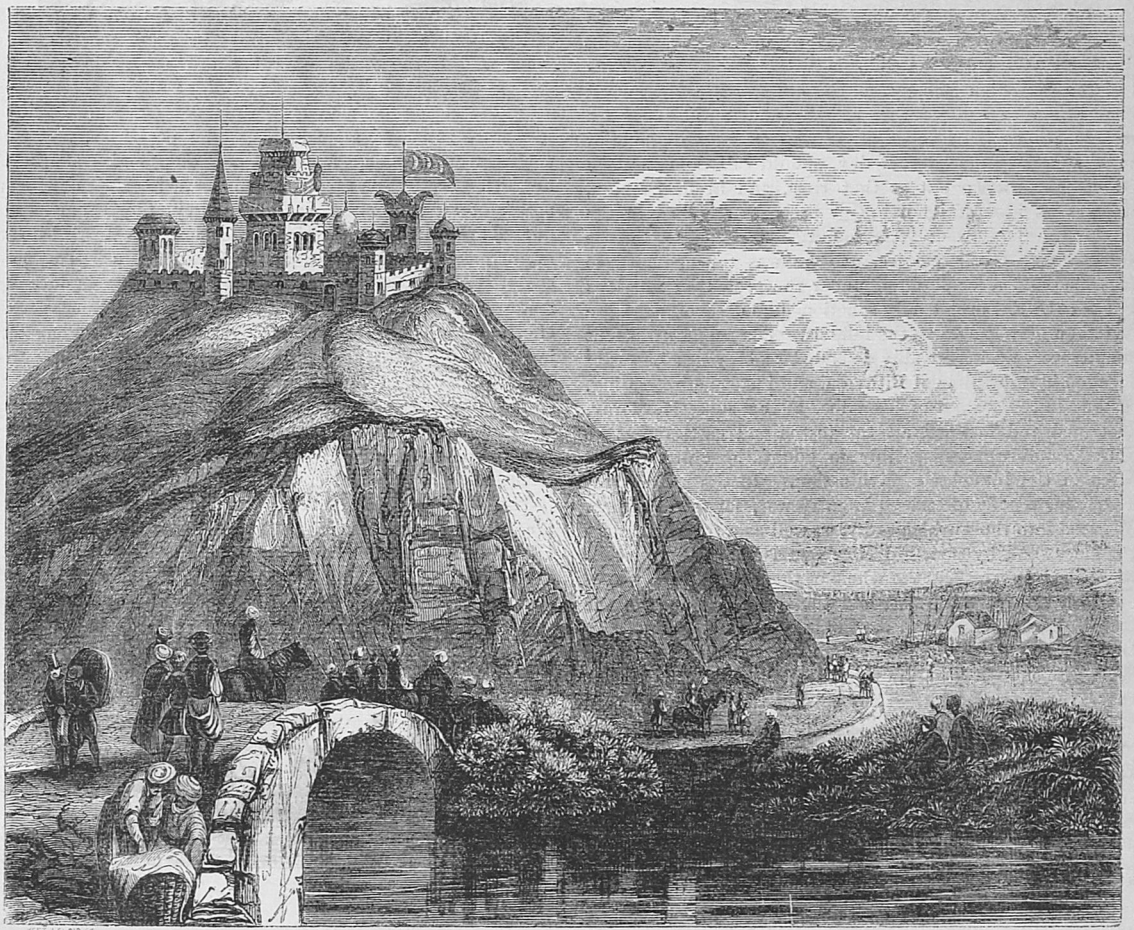
PASS IN THE BALKAN FRONTIER, BETWEEN TURKEY AND RUSSIA.



THE SEA OF MARMORA.



CONSTANTINOPLE.



THE CASTLE OF SYLIVRIA, ON THE SEA OF MARMORA.



frontier of the Greek empire, laid waste Phrygia. Diogenes Romanus, the emperor, marched against him with a strong force, and at first met with some slight successes; but at last, owing to the treachery of a subordinate prince, his army was thrown into confusion in the presence of the enemy, and the Turkish cavalry overwhelmed him in a vast cloud. The slaughter was immense, the booty rich, and Romanus himself was taken prisoner, and only liberated upon payment of a large ransom.

Under the successors of Alp Arslan, the Turkish dominions were still further extended, and those of the Greeks still further circumscribed. Palestine was conquered, and a new Mussulman kingdom, that of Roum, was founded, of which Jerusalem was the capital; and nothing interposed between the arms of the conqueror and the capital of the Cæsars but the narrow straits of the Bosphorus. The persecutions suffered by the Christian pilgrims who thronged from all parts of Europe, to pay their devotions at the sepulchre of Christ, became every day greater; and it was a terrible humiliation for the Roman emperor to know, that the barbarian Latins alone had the power as well as the will to aid them. We shall not enter into the details of the various conflicts which took place in the first and subsequent crusades between the Saracens and the Latins, but shall hurry on to the year 1240, when the Ottomans or Othmans, the ancestors of the present possessors of Constantinople, first appear upon the scene.

Gellaleddin, one of the bravest of the sultans of Persia, after a long and brave defence of his dominions against the Moguls, another Tartar horde, was at last defeated, and perished ignobly in the mountains of Kurdistan. His army was broken up by his death; and, while the bolder and more powerful of the Turkman hordes of which it was composed invaded Syria and violated the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, the more humble entered the service of Aladin, the sultan of Iconium. Amongst the latter were the ancestors of the Ottomans. When they joined Aladin, their shah Orthogrul reigned over four hundred families, who dwelt in a camp on the banks of the Sangar, and whom he governed, in peace and war, for fifty-two years. He had a son named Thaman, or Athman, or Othman, a softened form, which it afterwards assumed, who, finding himself gradually emancipated from all control by the downfall of the Seljukian dynasty, and the distance of the Mogul khans, began to assume the bearing and authority of a sovereign prince. In sober reality, he was nothing better than what we, at the present day, should call the chief of a band of marauders; but at that time, and in that region, there was no idea of ignominy or baseness attached to the occupation he followed. He found himself close to the frontier of the Greek empire, and he was thus enabled to gratify his passion for plunder, under the pretext of religious duty; for the Koran not only sanctioned, but encouraged the carrying on of war against the infidels. The passes of Mount Olympus were no longer ably defended as of yore; he easily descended into the plain of Bithynia, and instead of retreating, according to the custom of his tribe, after a successful foray, he retained and fortified all the towns and castles that he captured, and began insensibly to adopt the customs, and indulge in the luxuries of civilization. In the reign of his son Orchan, a body of trained infantry was, for the first time, introduced into the Turkish army, as well as a train of battering engines, and by their aid Nice and Nicomedia were captured. In the year 1300, the whole of the Asiatic provinces of the Greek empire were lost, and the seven churches of the apostle John soon made way for the mosques of Mahomet.

In 1341, the Greek emperor Cantacuzene was foolish or unfortunate enough to call in the aid of the Ottomans against his rivals and adversaries. They crossed the strait, rendered him the assistance he sought; and their friendship was cemented by the marriage of the Greek princess Theodora with the son of Orchan. This time the Ottomans evacuated Europe, but in 1353, they were again invited by Cantacuzene to aid him against his enemies in Romania; and Solyman, his son-in-law, crossed the Hellespont with ten thousand horse, who never went back. The Chersonesus was insensibly filled

by a Turkish colony; an earthquake dismantled the walls of many of the towns and fortresses in the provinces—the Turks entered in and took possession, and never gave them up. When Amurath, the brother of Solyman, ascended the throne in 1360, he reigned over the whole province of Romania, from the Hellespont to Mount Hæmus, and the verge of the Greek capital; and he chose Adrianople as the seat of his government. He marched against the Bulgarians, Servians, Bosnians, and Albanians, and repeatedly defeated them, while the Greek emperor, John Palæologus, and his four sons, humbly followed the march of the conqueror, and awaited his pleasure. The fate of Constantinople, the last relic of so much greatness, of so much strength, of so much glory and civilization, was at length to be decided. Her hour was come, and now, for the first time in a thousand years, she found herself in the midst of her enemies with none to help or deliver her.

Amurath turned his victories over the Slavonian nations to excellent account. A fifth of the hardiest and most robust of the youth of the Danubian provinces were selected for the sultan's use. They were educated in the religion and arms of the Turkish empire; they were then blessed by Hagi Boktash, a celebrated dervish, who, placing the sleeve of his gown on the head of one of them, exclaimed, "Let them be called janizaries (*yengi cheri*—new or young soldiers); let their countenance ever be bright, their hands victorious, their swords keen; let their spears always hang over the heads of their enemies, and wherever they go, may they return with a white face!"\*

The plan was found to succeed so admirably, that afterwards every fifth child, or the children of every fifth year, were selected from amongst the Christian population of the empire in the same manner, and instructed from the age of fourteen in seminaries appointed for the purpose, where they were taught to shoot with the bow, to wrestle, and speak Turkish. Some of them were employed as the household attendants of the sultan, or in the dockyards and arsenals; but the greater number were draughted into the army, and formed the first body of infantry which had appeared in Europe after the fall of the Roman empire. Here was the great secret of their success. All the western powers at that day believed that their main strength lay in their cavalry; no gentlemen would deign to fight on foot; and when foot soldiers were employed they were recruited from amongst the peasantry, and acted not as a united body, but as a sort of attendants upon the knights. As long as the Christians were ignorant of the vast power of a disciplined force of infantry, the Ottomans conquered; but as soon as their attention was turned to the improvement of this arm, and skill in its use became an essential qualification for a general, the balance was once more restored, and the Turks began to decline. Every possible effort was made to promote the *esprit de corps* amongst the janizaries, so as to keep up a feeling of unity amongst them when scattered in the various towns and provinces of the empire. They thus became the strongest bulwark of the Ottoman power in the earlier days of its establishment in Europe, though we shall see hereafter how greatly they contributed to its present decline.

The other exploits of Amurath and his successor Bajazet are numerous and weighty. The latter defeated hosts of Christian crusaders, spread terror through Europe, and threatened to feed his horse with a bushel of oats upon the altar of St. Peter's at Rome; and at last was himself conquered, and captured at the great battle of Angora, the greatest and most sanguinary that has ever occurred in the history of the world, by Timour, the Tartar khan. Amurath the Second besieged Constantinople in 1422, with an army of 200,000 men; but the strength of the walls, and the valour of the mercenaries whom the Greeks employed to defend them—for they were now too feeble or too effeminate to defend themselves—proved sufficient to repel his attacks, and the Greek empire—if that term may be applied to the city itself, for that

\* *White and black face* are terms of praise and reproach among the Turks.

was all that now remained—received a respite of thirty years longer.

It is melancholy to read, even at this distance of time, of the dismay which reigned at that period at Constantinople. Many are the romances that have been written and the homilies that have been uttered upon fallen greatness, but no better instance of the vanity of earthly power could ever be cited "to point a moral and adorn a tale," than the fate of this unhappy city. The two emperors, John and Emanuel Palæologus, who occupied the throne during this period, were in the last extremity of despair. To save their capital they were prepared to sacrifice everything, even their religion, which a thousand years of strife and contention with the Latins had made it a point of honour with every true Greek to uphold. If the Pope procured him fifteen galleys, 500 men-at-arms, and 1,000 archers, he was ready to heal the schism and become his obedient son, abandon all points in dispute between the two churches, and prevail upon his clergy and people to submit themselves to the spiritual sway of the successor of St. Peter. He went as a miserable suppliant to Rome—the first Greek emperor who had ever done so—and there, such was his terror of the ferocious Turk, that in the presence of four cardinals he acknowledged as a true Catholic the supremacy of the Pope and the double procession of the Holy Ghost. He then kissed the Pope's feet, and hands, and mouth, publicly at St. Peter's, and was in return allowed to lead his Holiness' mule. Alas, poor Greece! Eight centuries previously, bishops were ready to cut their rivals' throats, and shed blood upon the altar itself, sooner than make either of these concessions; but to do the Greek clergy and people justice, whatever the emperor might say, they were as obstinate schismatics as ever, and hated the Latin Christians as cordially as the followers of the false prophet. John's conversion, however, did not avail him. The western powers could not be induced to do anything for him, and after a wearisome delay he returned empty-handed to Constantinople, after being arrested for debt at Venice on his way.

His son and successor, Manuel, made a similar excursion for the same purpose, and with no better success. He was received with all due respect in Rome. He passed on to France, and was there welcomed by Charles VI. and his nobles with magnificent politeness. He was lodged in the Louvre, and a succession of balls and fêtes were got up in the vain attempt to drive away his cares; but his demands for assistance were met with expressions of cold regret that it was impossible to comply with them, or vague promises more painful and more injurious than flat refusals. He crossed over to England, was met by Henry IV. at Blackheath, and during a stay of some days in London, was treated with all the respect and attention due to the representative of the declining dignity of imperial Rome. But the quarrels of the Roses gave the English no time for another crusade. Manuel returned to his capital, after an absence of two years, poorer and more downcast than when he left it.

On the 1st of November, 1448, the last of the Cæsars ascended the imperial throne in the person of Constantine Palæologus. The sultan of the Ottomans, reigning at this time at Adrianople, was Mahomet the Second, a man of great valour, unscrupulous ambition, great learning, but of ferocious temper. He declared his intention of building a fortress upon the European side of the Bosphorus, close to the walls of Constantinople. The emperor feebly remonstrated. Mahomet set him at defiance, and declared that he would order the next envoy who came with such a message to be flayed alive. The castle was accordingly built, and the marble of Christian churches was employed in its construction; the horses of the janizaries, who guarded the workmen, strayed into the neighbouring cornfields—the owners drove them out—frays ensued in which many of the Greeks were massacred; the city gates were closed in alarm; Mahomet overjoyed went home to prepare for war. Constantine in despair declared that since the Turks were bent on his destruction, he would put his trust in the Lord of Hosts and die sword in hand at the head of his people.

The winter of 1452-3 was spent in preparations on both

sides: Mahomet levying vast armaments and casting guns—for gunpowder had just been invented—of monstrous size; Constantine in strengthening the fortifications, saying his prayers, and soliciting aid from abroad. But the west looked coldly on, and on the 6th of April, 1453, the crescent standard was planted before the gate of St. Romanus, and the famous siege of Constantinople commenced.

Some of the populace had previously withdrawn, and many of the degenerate nobility had accompanied them in their flight. Others kept masses of treasure in concealment which, if patriotically devoted to the state, might have employed whole armies of mercenaries in its defence. The Turks numbered 300,000 men; but although Constantinople contained 100,000 inhabitants, most of them were priests, or women, or men so devoid of spirit that they had lost even the first and noblest instinct of our nature, that which prompts a man to fight in self-defence, and in defence of his family and his liberty. A diligent inquiry was made at each house how many of the inmates were able and willing to bear arms in the coming struggle, but the minister to whom the duty was entrusted bore to his master the terrible news that of all this vast multitude there were but 4,970 Romans to man the walls. The old Romans, after losing 60,000 men in eighteen months, out of a population of fighting men of 270,000, and suffering three defeats from the armies of Hannibal, in which their best and bravest lost their lives, met not in fear or lamentation in the forum, but in fury, and the remnant marched forth to fight again, unconquered and unconquerable. At Marathon 10,000 Greeks charged a countless host of Persians on an open sandy plain, in a running step, and drove them on board their ships in confusion. How true it is that freedom is its own best defender, and that slavery is the grave of valour, of honour, and of manly sentiment!

Constantine had sought, by conforming to the Roman faith, and suffering service to be celebrated in the church of Sophia, with the Latin ritual, to secure the aid of the Christians of the west; but the unfortunate man by this step only drew on himself the rage of his own subjects, and the degenerate slaves who trembled at the sound of the Turkish cannon were ready to massacre the Roman Catholic priests because they consecrated a wafer of *unleavened* bread, and poured cold water into the sacramental cup. They yelled in the streets, what need had they of Latin aid, and in drunken zeal declared that with the Virgin's aid they could themselves deliver their city from her assailants.

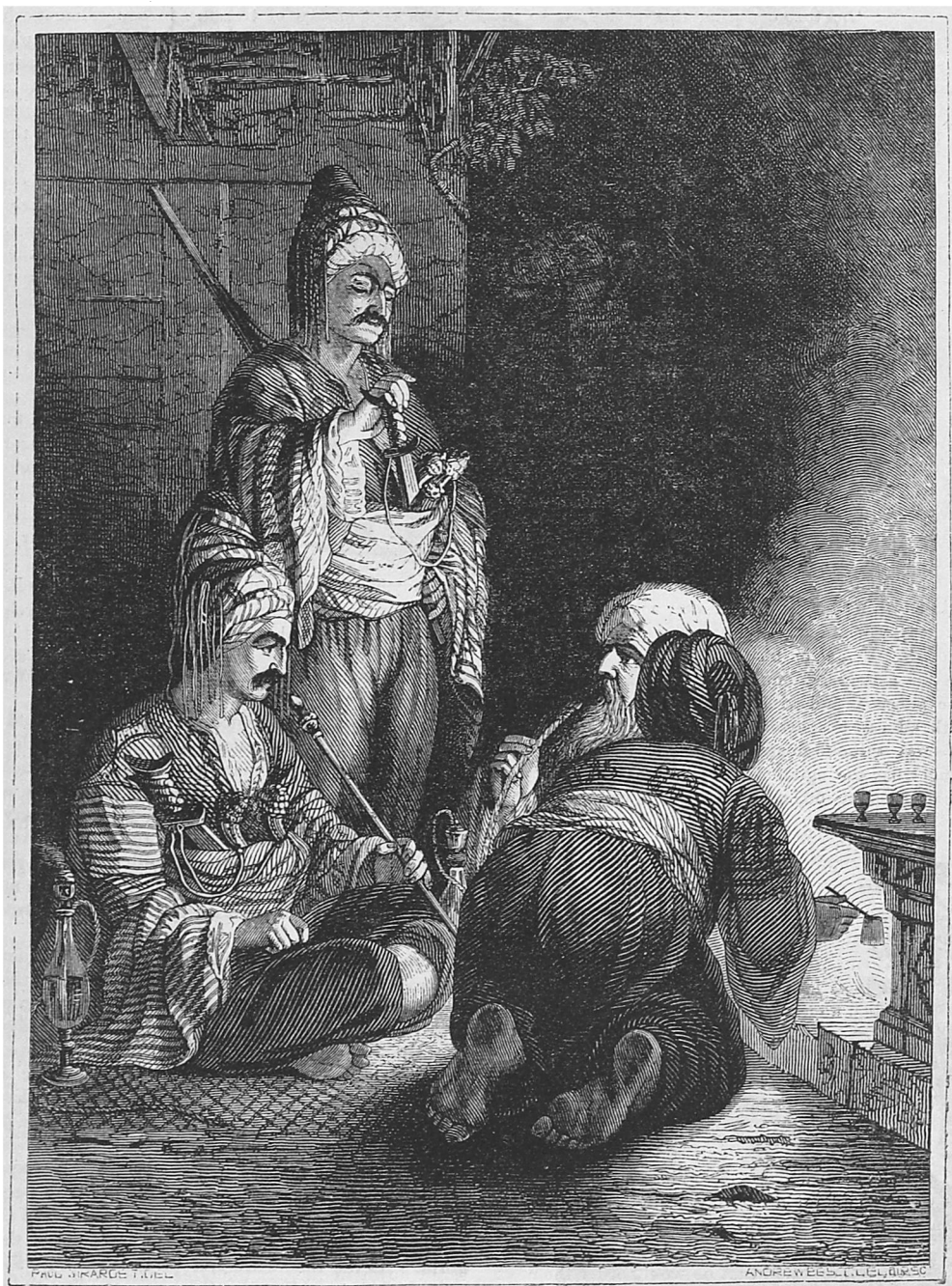
To his five thousand volunteers Constantine was enabled to add two thousand foreigners under the command of John Justiniani, a noble Genoese, and these were all he had to defend a city sixteen miles in circumference; but they were animated by the greatest enthusiasm, and he himself was in every way worthy of the name he bore.

The Greeks at first sallied from the gates and engaged in desultory conflicts outside the walls, but they soon found that losses which were nothing to the Turks were disastrous to them in the highest degree, and they henceforth confined themselves to the defence of the ramparts. Their artillery was scanty, but it was well served, though small in calibre. They had a few great guns, but feared to fire them, lest the explosion should overthrow the old walls. Mahomet's great guns, in the meantime, thundered against the fortifications, and at last made some impression. The Turks advanced to fill up the ditch with fascines and rubbish; but all that they threw down in the day the Greeks removed at night. Mahomet mined; they countermined. He erected huge towers on a level with the walls, and by the aid of battering-rams, overturned the turret of St. Romanus; they overturned his towers and built up that of St. Romanus in one night. When he saw it in the morning he swore that had thirty-seven thousand prophets told him, he would not have believed that infidels could perform such a feat in so short a time. He poured liquid fire upon the Greeks; they poured liquid fire on him. He planted scaling-ladders, and the janizaries mounted them in a furious throng; the Greeks hurled them down as fast as they mounted, in one mangled and gory mass.

Towards the end of April fire-ships arrive from Genoa laden with supplies for the weary garrison. They enter the Bosphorus, and are already in sight of the city, when the sultan sends a fleet of three hundred vessels against them. They engage; the unwieldy and badly managed barks of the Turks are overwhelmed by the skill of the Christian sailors. The slaughter is frightful. Mahomet sits on horseback on the beach

came on shore he was stretched on his face and received one hundred strokes with a golden rod under the kindling eye of his master, but the city is supplied with provisions and ammunition, and the Greeks are jubilant.

It was now evident that the Turks must abandon the siege if the city could not be attacked from the sea as well as from the land. Their fleet lay far down in the straits, and the



BULGARIANS, INHABITANTS OF TURKEY IN EUROPE.

surrounded by his officers, and swears and yells with fury as he sees his followers giving way. They take heart again, they scramble up the sides of the Genoese vessels, Mahomet spurs his horse into the water in impotent rage and threatens them with vengeance in case of another failure. They are swept down by the artillery and burnt with liquid fire, and twelve thousand Turkish bodies floating in the Bosphorus attest the fury of the combat. When the Moslem commander

Genoese vessels, moored in a firm line, lay between them and Constantinople. Mahomet constructed a wooden way ten miles in length, dragged his ships along it in one night, and launched them on the side next the Black Sea. They were chained together, a battery constructed upon them, and several breaches were speedily made in the walls. The garrison was thinned; four towers were levelled with the ground; the Greeks began to despair.